

SCHOOL BOARD OF BREVARD COUNTY WORKING GUIDELINES

2023



**HOW BOARD MEMBERS WORK
TOGETHER AS A GOVERNANCE
TEAM IS AS IMPORTANT AS
THE POSITION ITSELF.**



Board/Superintendent Communications Framework

I. Expectations - Board Meetings/Agendas

A. The Board Expects

1. Regular communication with the Superintendent monthly via monthly meetings.
2. To be notified by email or text message as soon as possible for
 - a. School emergency (lock down, fire, ...)
 - b. Student emergency (arrest, injury, death)
 - c. Staff emergency (arrest, injury, death)
3. To receive Board agendas and supporting documentation 14 days before the scheduled Board meeting (with limited exceptions).
4. That all Board members will receive the same information
 - a. One member's request for additional information results in all members receiving or having the same access to information.
 - b. Special communications are done for all Board members.
5. That Board members will treat each other and staff with respect.
6. That the Superintendent and staff will treat all Board members with respect.
7. That reasonable requests for additional information will be satisfied in a timely manner.
8. Address Board Member concerns or discussion topics at a Work Session, when feasible, instead of during a Board Meeting. Provide the information to the Board 7 days in advance for preparation.
9. No surprises!

***“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”***

-Henry Ford

B. The Superintendent Expects

1. That requests for additions to the agenda will be received as early as possible before the meeting.
2. That during Board meetings direction is only given when a majority of the Board votes to give direction and only to the Superintendent.
3. That Board members will be respectful to each other, to staff and be respectful of staff's time.
4. That Board members will read all supporting documentation before the Board meeting. Sensitive situations may arise where the Board Chair may receive information that the entire Board does not immediately receive to resolve the situation or receive guidance on handling the situation. The whole Board will immediately receive the information upon the situation's resolution, or before the District releases any information to the public.
5. That Board members will notify staff members with questions about agenda items or supporting materials with as much notification as possible before the scheduled Board meeting.
6. That the Board will vote to put an item on a future agenda giving consideration to Board policy before significant staff time is expended and/or when preparing the agenda item would impact meeting previously approved goals. The superintendent will determine a reasonable timeline for response. Discussion items will not be considered a formal agenda item requiring approval.

The relationships Board members have with each other, the Superintendent, other staff, students and the community influence the Board's efficacy. Collaborative skills directly affect the Board's ability to come to consensus, advocate with integrity and create an affirmative atmosphere that encourages the best from every stakeholder.

C. Agenda Agreements

1. Board members may request that items be placed on the agenda.
2. The Board chair will meet with the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent when necessary to review and approve the agenda.
3. A consent agenda will be used for items not requiring discussion.
4. Any Board member may ask to have an item pulled from the consent agenda to allow for discussion or individual consideration. The Board member will notify the Superintendent prior to the meeting of intent to pull an item and what additional information may be required (NO SURPRISES). Pulled consent items will be discussed after the consent agenda vote.
5. Additions to the agenda after release to the public should be approved by the Board chair.



D. Meeting Preparation Agreements

1. Board members will come to the meeting prepared to discuss items on the agenda.
2. Board members will notify the Superintendent about positive and negative comments received from the community about the district or specific agenda items.
3. Board members will give the Superintendent time to research clarifying questions about agenda items and not spring surprises at the Board meeting.

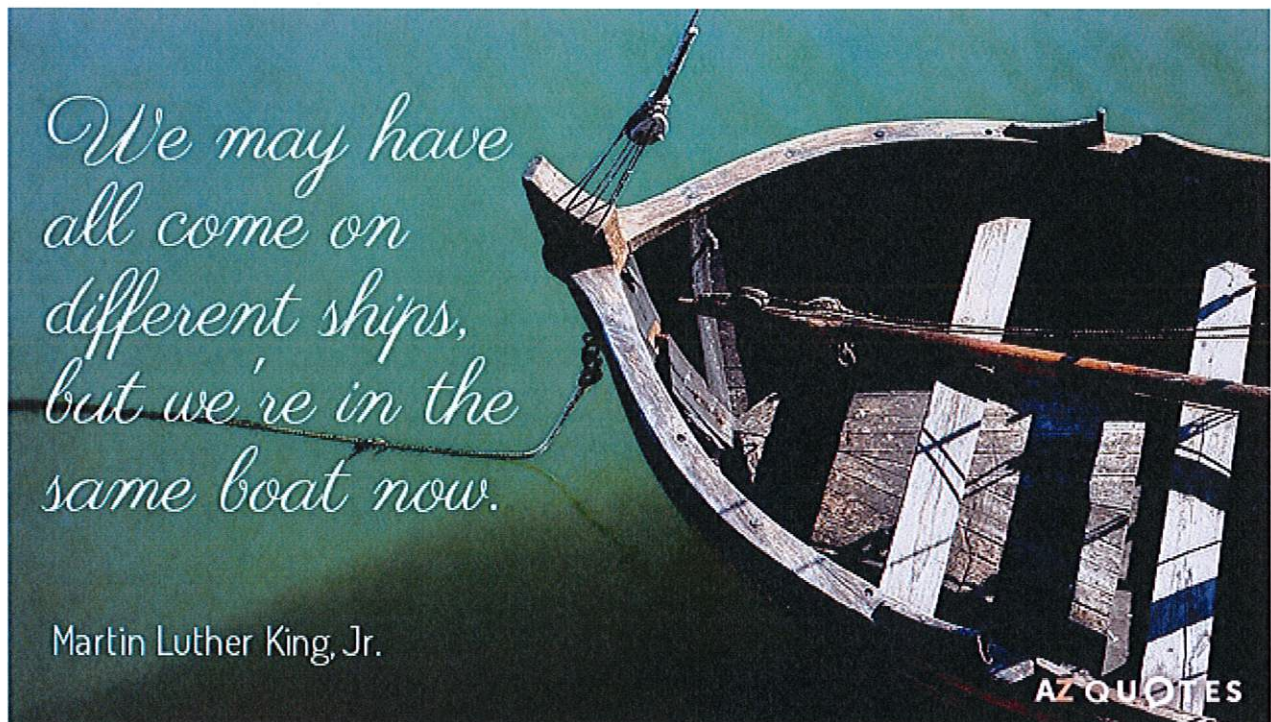
E. During the Meeting Agreements

1. Meeting agendas are available to the public
 - a. At the meeting site
 - b. On-line
2. Procedures for public comment are clear and available at the meeting site.
3. The Board Chair will facilitate responses to public comment during the meeting.
4. The Board Chair will ensure that only one person speaks at a time and that each member has an equal opportunity to participate.
5. The public is welcome to participate in the meeting during the designated public comment time.
6. Board members will model the behaviors expected of students, staff, and community members.
7. Issues, not people (staff, public, each other), will be attacked during meetings.
8. Members will listen respectfully to each other and staff.
9. The Superintendent, Legal Counsel and all Board members will monitor for compliance with law and policy.
10. The focus of Board meetings will be work of the Board and not administrative/staff work.
 - a. Is the item to celebrate a success?
 - b. Is the item a policy decision?
 - c. Is the item something that requires Board action?
 - d. Is the item needed to ensure accountability?
 - e. Does the item align with the strategic plan?
11. Members will make efficient use of speaking time.

note to self: **STAY FOCUSED**

F. After Board Meeting Agreements

1. Each Board member may exercise his or her option to state the reason(s) for the decision made whether for or against an action, but board members and staff will ultimately support the decision of the Board as an entity.
2. Board members and staff will abide by confidentiality laws of executive sessions and closed sessions.
3. Ensure that all documents, records, reports, etc. are processed and maintained in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.
4. "No public officer, employee of an agency, or local government attorney shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for himself, herself, or others." See Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes.



School/Community Communications Framework

I. Commitment to Schools/Departments

A. Site Visit Agreements

1. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events (sporting events, fine arts events, community events) as a spectator as their time permits.
2. Board members wishing to visit a school are encouraged to notify the principal of the visit in advance.
3. The Board member will clearly display his or her badge.
4. Board members will follow all school policies and procedures
5. Board members will:
 - a. respect staff time and allow staff to perform their duties.
 - b. not evaluate staff.
 - c. not give direction to any staff or students.
 - d. not accept gifts (other than nominal tokens) or favors from any district employee.
6. When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as Board members.
7. Concerns raised as a result of school visits by Board members will be directed to the Superintendent.

*When you make a commitment, you create
hope. When you keep a commitment, you
create trust!*

-John C. Maxwell

II. Commitment to the Community

A. Board and Community Communications

1. Board members will serve as ambassadors for their district, emphasizing positive aspects of the district.
2. The Superintendent and media relations staff will serve as the spokesperson for the district with the media.
3. The chair will serve as the official spokesperson for the Board with the media to ensure consistent messaging on critical issues. Individual Board members responding to the media do not represent the Board as a whole, which shall be stated during their response.
4. Complaints received from staff or the community will be directed through the staff person best able to provide resolution of the complaint, or to the Superintendent.
5. Complaints should be in writing and processed per policy/protocol.
6. The Board is the last stop in the complaint process.
7. Board Members have no individual authority to solve problems.
8. Board members may ensure that complaints are addressed.
9. Anonymity is never guaranteed.



Agreements

I. Board and Superintendent

A. For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Board and between the Board and the administration, we, the members of the School District Senior Leadership Team (Board and Superintendent) do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

1. Children’s interests come first. The Board will represent the needs and interests of all the children in our district.
2. Don’t spring surprises on other Board members or the Superintendent. Surprises to the Board or the Superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. There should be no surprises at a Board meeting. We agree to ask the Board chairperson or the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting.
3. Communication between staff and the Board is encouraged as long as it follows Board policy. The senior leadership team recognizes that “good,” “timely”, “open”, and “constant” communication regarding school district issues is extremely important. We will strive to anticipate issues which may become important or are sensitive to our school district and district stakeholders.
4. Encourage outreach to staff. While the Board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. Board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the Superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent and/or designee.

SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS

5. Own the collective decision-making process. The senior leadership team will support decisions made by the Board and/or the administrative team once a decision is made. We will support the majority decision(s).
6. Exemplify the governance role. The Board has ownership of policies and this is the entity's number one duty. The leadership team (Board and Superintendent) will support the policies our district currently has in place.
7. The Board will hold workshops to continue to study and review policies for effectiveness and appropriately engage key stakeholders in the development or deletion of policies and policy revisions. We will maintain and apply district policies consistently while being cognizant of and recognizing the potential uniqueness of any given situation.
8. Annually conduct a self-assessment/evaluation. The Board will address its behavior by yearly self-evaluation and by addressing itself to any individual problems, such as poor meeting attendance or leaks of confidential information.
9. Clearly state goals. The Board will set clear goals for themselves and the Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent will set clear goals for the District.
10. Utilize CEO input. The Superintendent is the chief executive officer of the senior leadership team and should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the Board.
11. Board acts only as a body. Individual Board members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual Board member will not take unilateral action. The Board chairperson will communicate the position(s) of the Board on controversial issues. When Board members serve on various school committees their role shall be defined by the Board as silent observer or active participant.

SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS

12. Meeting protocol. Conduct at a Board meeting is very important. We desire to have a legacy of a well-functioning, effective Board. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the Board or the district. We will be open minded and willing to “deeply listen” to all speakers/presenters. We agree that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. We will not react to impromptu complaints on the spot, but will assure any individual(s) that the school district will follow-up.
13. Avoid marathon Board meetings. To be efficient and effective, long Board meetings must be avoided. Individual Board member speeches will be succinct. If a Board member believes s/he doesn't have enough information or has questions, every effort should be made to ask questions of responsible staff or the Superintendent.
14. Practice efficient decision-making. Board meetings are for decision-making, action, votes and appropriate discussion. We agree to move to the question when discussion is repetitive.
15. Speak to agenda issues. The Board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow Board members. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the Superintendent.
16. Executive/closed sessions will be held only for appropriate subjects. Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments.

Standards

I. School Board Policy 0123

A. Standards of Boardmanship

- *As a member of the Board, each Board member shall promote the best interest of the School District as a whole, and, to that end, each Board member shall adhere to the following educational and ethical standards:*
1. make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children, regardless of ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing;
 2. bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, State Board of Education policies, and court orders pertaining to schools;
 3. recognize that decisions must be made by the Board as a whole and that when made, these decisions must be supported by the entire Board;
 4. focus Board action on policymaking, goal setting, planning, and evaluation and insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
 5. support school personnel in the proper performance of their duties;
 6. hold confidential all matters pertaining to the educational system that may needlessly harm individuals or the system and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
 7. attend all scheduled Board meetings and workshops insofar as is possible and become informed on the issues to be considered at these meetings;
 8. work with the Superintendent, neither undermining nor intruding into the areas legally assigned to the school administration;

SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS

9. make policy decisions only after full discussion at public Board meetings and render these decisions based on available facts refusing to surrender that judgment to individuals or special groups;
10. encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communication between the Board and students, staff and all elements of the community;
11. inform myself about current educational issues through study and participation in appropriate programs and/or workshops;
12. refrain from using my Board position for personal or political gain;
13. encourage recognition of the achievements of students and staff and of the involvement of business and community members;
14. listen responsively to the community and make decisions based on the best interest of the system as a whole;
15. support legislation and funding which will help to improve the educational opportunities and environment for students and staff;
16. remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of all the students attending the District and that we must provide appropriate curriculum, facilities, and motivation so that students will be encouraged to love learning, enabling them to achieve their fullest and highest potential.

B. Code of Ethics

- 1.** All Board members shall complete four (4) hours of ethics training each calendar year that addresses, at a minimum, Section 8, Article II of the State Constitution, the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees (F.S. Chapter 112, Part III), and the public records and public meetings laws of this State. This requirement may be satisfied by completion of a continuing legal education class or other continuing professional education class, seminar, or presentation if the required subjects are covered.
- 2.** Furthermore, pursuant to F.S. 1001.42(7), a Board member may not knowingly sign and transmit to any State official a report of alleged misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student which the Board member knows to be false or incorrect, or knowingly fail to adopt policies that requires instructional personnel and school administrators to report alleged misconduct by other instructional personnel and school administrators, or that require the investigation of all reports of alleged misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators, if the misconduct affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Violation of these provisions will result in the forfeit of the Board member's salary for one (1) year.



Remain Focused on the Big Picture

Agreed to this 9th day of January, 2023



Megan Wright, District 1



Jennifer Jenkins, District 3



Katy Campbell, District 5



Gene Trent, District 2



Matt Susin, District 4